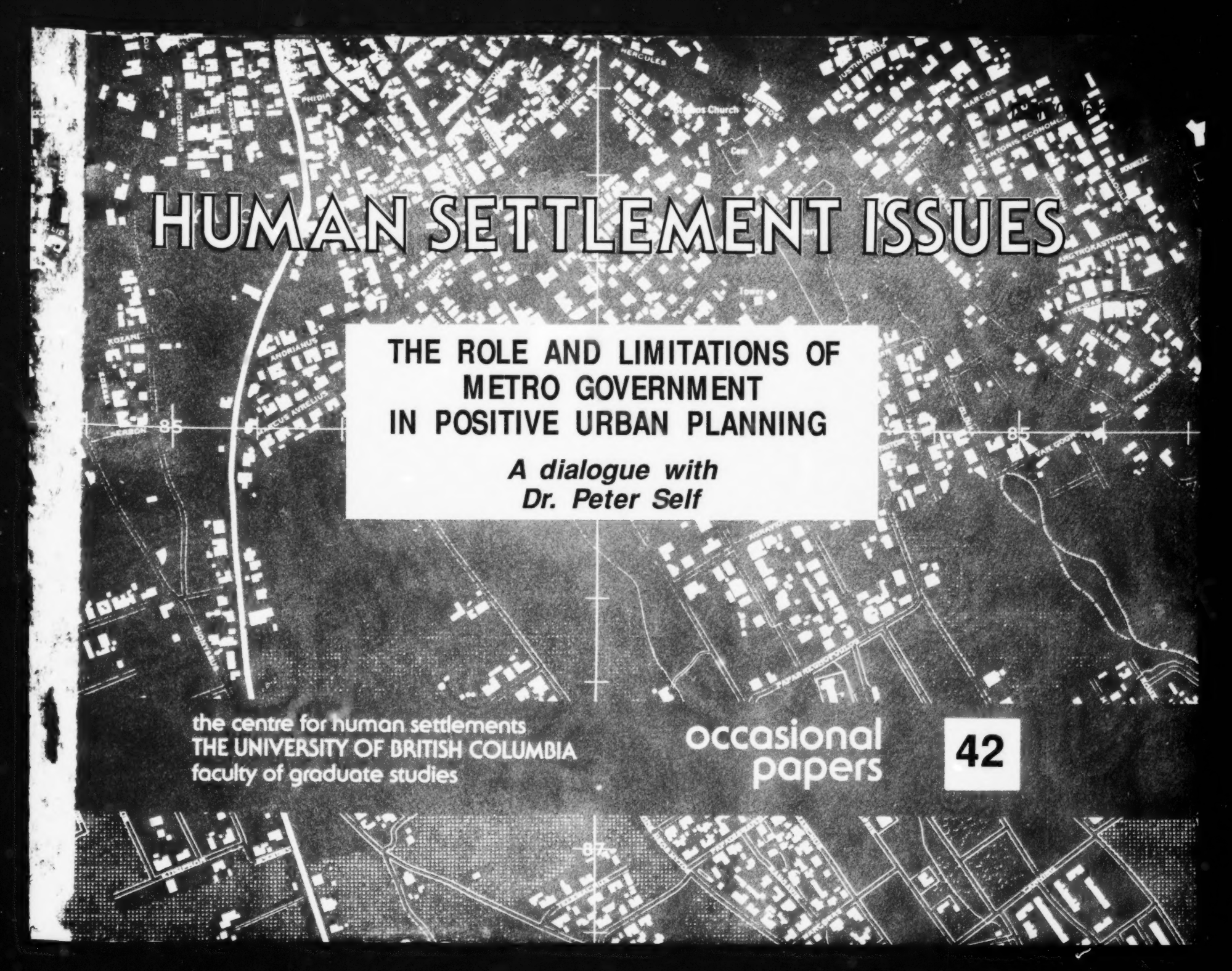

HUMAN SETTLEMENT ISSUES

THE ROLE AND LIMITATIONS OF METRO GOVERNMENT IN POSITIVE URBAN PLANNING

A dialogue with
Dr. Peter Self

the centre for human settlements
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42

THE ROLE AND LIMITATIONS OF METRO GOVERNMENT IN POSITIVE URBAN PLANNING

A dialogue with

Dr. Peter Self

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PREFACE

Urban planning at the metropolitan scale has actively engaged academics, professionals and politicians since the 1940s. Great Britain, and to a large degree Canada, have pioneered in this area of administration experimenting with various governmental structures and planning procedures in response to rapidly expanding urban populations around the core of established cities. It is clear from a wide range of comparable experiences, some of which are detailed in this publication, that the dynamics of urban growth tends to outrun the administrative and political boundaries initially designed to deal with social, economic, and land use issues within them.

Dr. Peter Self, Emeritus Professor of Public Administration at the London School of Economics, has had a long and distinguished career as an academic and professional concerned particularly with governance and the planning process. His recent publications include two books: Planning the Urban Region, (Allen and Unwin 1982); and, Political Theories of Modern Government, (Allen and Unwin, 1985). "Cities in Flood" is another well known landmark publication. Currently he is Visiting Fellow in the Urban Research Unit of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University at Canberra. The UBC Centre for Human Settlements was

fortunate in being able to invite Dr. Self to deliver the 1987 Habitat Lecture in January 1987 under the joint sponsorship of the School of Community and Regional Planning and the UBC Centre. The present publication is an edited manuscript of the initial presentation and includes a series of questions and answers with the audience at the original Habitat lecture. At that time Dr. Peter Self drew on his long experience of metro government structures and their planning capabilities in Great Britain, France, Sweden and more recently, in Australia. Dr Self's observations seem particularly significant in light of recent radical changes to local government structure in Great Britain, particularly the demise of the Greater London Council. His observations and analysis are also of considerable interest to Canadians attempting to adjust the political and administrative structures of Toronto, Montreal and other metropolitan areas to the urban realities of growth, expansion and governmental accountability.

The present publication owes its editing and presentation to the good management of Dr. Knute Buttedahl, Associate Director of the UBC Centre, and it is hoped it will stimulate continuing dialogue between academics and professionals in an area of growing importance to planning urban growth and development in Canada.

Dr. H. Peter Oberlander
Director
Centre for Human Settlements

THE ROLE AND LIMITATIONS OF METRO GOVERNMENT IN POSITIVE URBAN PLANNING

This presentation will focus on regional or metropolitan planning and will discuss a little about the case for that kind of planning and what has happened to it; a little about examples of apparently successful urban regional planning; a little about questions of structure and organization; and finally about planning today and politics.

To start at a fairly basic level, the distinction is often made between negative and positive planning. I take negative planning to refer to systems where the aim of the planning authority is to regulate land use and separate incompatible uses, but the planning authority makes no positive efforts to get the sort of development specified in the plan. Moreover, in this sort of planning the structure of the plan is often very strongly

influenced by market trends. I take positive planning to mean planning where the planning authority or body sets out actual goals and purposes for the pattern of development and for the structure of the city or urban region.

Now, positive planning, if it is to exist at all, has to occur on what can crudely be called a regional scale. I will not at this point discuss the distinctions between metropolitan areas, urban regions and broader regions. I will just refer to a broad metropolitan or supra-metropolitan scale. This is not to say that smaller local governments are debarred from positive planning, but I think it needs to be done within some broader framework or strategy and I think too that this is the lesson of experience.

What sort of case is there for positive planning in this sense? The three "e's" is one way of looking at it; efficiency, environmentalism, equality. But what do those big words mean? I take efficiency here to be the argument that by having a planned development the necessary investment and infrastructure can be co-ordinated more effectively, economies of scale can

be realized and that this should apply to both public and private investments, and further that provision can be made up to a point for future needs so that the disruptive and expensive changes that occur in an unplanned system become less necessary.

Environmentalism refers to the desirability of conserving and protecting certain natural resources and certain humanized resources such as: beautiful townscapes, countrysides, natural resources, etc.

Equality refers to the argument that it is an important aspect of equality in a democratic society to improve the physical and the living environment for relatively poor and underprivileged people, to take steps to upgrade their environment and to enable them to get better access to facilities and services.

So you could split up the case for positive planning in these sorts of terms, rather abstract perhaps, nevertheless it will take one some distance. Positive regional planning has been, in a way, more direct than this and, in a sense, cruder. It has represented an acceptance of certain collective social goals about the pattern of development. When I say

acceptance, that is a difficult word also. There may be a technocratic element in the whole process; there certainly has been, but linked with sufficient popular acceptance and consensus that certain concrete social goals were desirable and attainable. Now let me illustrate these points from the examples of three reasonably successful regional planning exercises, although admittedly they all lie in the past like many good things.

First, there has been a continuous history of regional planning in London. The most famous period was immediately after World War II, when there were the Abercrombie Plans for Greater London and the County of London (Figure 1), which were largely applied and implemented during the next 20 years and were followed by the Strategy for the Southeast in 1964, and the Strategic Plan for the Southeast in 1970 (Figure 2). Thus there was a continuous history of regional planning for London, which had a great deal of impact. Its features are fairly familiar, they consisted of the greenbelt concept, the new town concept, control of densities in London, decentralisation of employment to new and expanding towns, and large redevelopment schemes of the so-called blighted and blitzed inner urban areas.

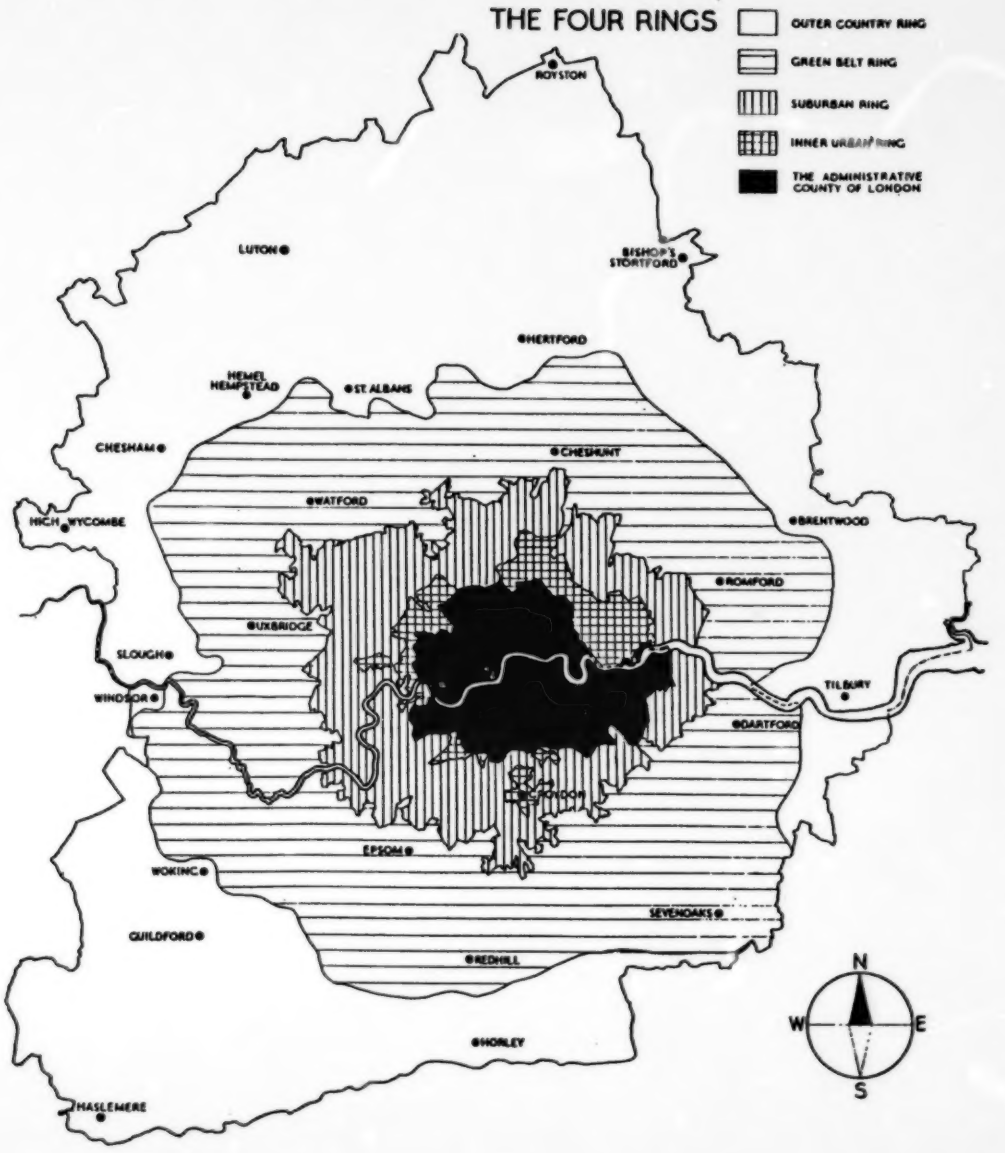


Figure 1: Greater London Plan

Figure 2: The Strategic Plan for the South East Region

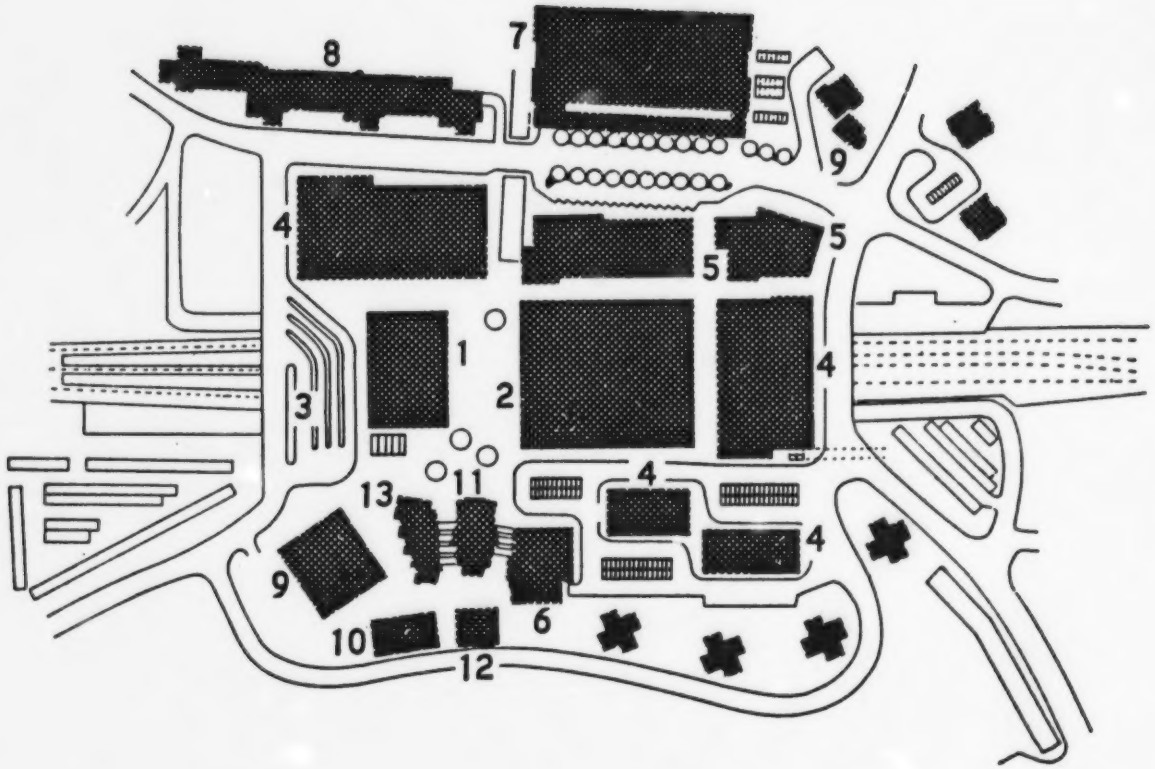
These plans could be argued to accord with the values I have mentioned. Efficiency was served through integrating the decentralisation of population and employment, instead of permitting metropolitan sprawl, and through anticipating effectively the required infrastructure for the new and expanded towns. There was a saving of public service costs and a reduction in journeys to work. Environmentalism was certainly a purpose of these plans, the idea of conserving a green backcloth being linked at that time with a case for conserving agricultural land. Equality was most certainly present in the plans to build new communities for many people living in congested parts of London.

Next, the same three values are to be found in the Stockholm Plans. Efficiency there took the particular form of a very close integration between the city's new transportation system and its plan for satellite towns which were developed very closely together. Environmentalism was pursued through the protection of many natural features, the insulation of the new residential areas from road traffic, extensive footpaths and cyclepaths and pedestrian-oriented shopping centres. Swedes being very keen on environmental protection, this goal has increasingly become a main purpose of regional planning in Sweden. Equality was a strong motive.

There was a very large non-profit housing program in Stockholm, largely provided by co-operatives and by city controlled companies and linked in with the complete public planning of the environment.

Thirdly, Paris followed the London example twenty years later and went in for regional planning upon a still more ambitious scale, but with rather similar objectives.

I believe that these are three fairly successful examples of positive regional planning. However, all these plans did get entangled with very mistaken housing policies, leading to excessive demolition of old housing which still had a useful life and to the fallacies of very highrise, prefabricated mass housing. These housing failures led to some discrediting of all the plans I have mentioned, a result which could have been avoided without in any way spoiling the other purposes of these plans. Let me add one bit of evidence about the positive results taken from a book by Poppenoe[1] which compares Levittown, Pennsylvania, with Vallingby which is a satellite town of Stockholm (Figure 3). Levittown had the great advantage at that time of good and relatively cheap mass-produced housing, of detached family type, and Levittown came out very well from local social surveys in terms of the quality of the housing. But on all other factors,



KEY: 1: train station; 2: commercial building; 3: bus stop and taxi stands; 4: commercial buildings; 5: two stores; 6: hotel; 7: parking garage (600 capacity); 8: apartment building; 9: churches; 10: library; 11: cinema; 12: youth centre; 13: assembly hall

Figure 3: Vällingby (Stockholm) Centre Plan

it scored very badly indeed. It scored very badly on access to work and facilities, there being no public transport to speak of, and shopping and other facilities being scattered and inadequate. It scored badly on the safety and attractiveness of the environment. Whereas in the case of Vallingby, the local inhabitants rated the results very high under almost every head. They appreciated the proximity of excellent social and recreational facilities, the pedestrian ways that took them from the housing into the shopping centre and then by rapid transport to the city centre, and the careful planning which made for easy and safe personal movement. The quality of the local environment was highly praised and the housing fairly well liked, although it was at higher densities than Levittown, much of it being in three- or four-storey garden apartments. The planned environment of Vallingby was closely dependent upon a broader plan for the Stockholm city-region.

How about the structure and organization needed for positive city regional planning? It is clear that such positive planning requires strong political backing and the effective co-ordination of public policies and investment. In what circumstances do these things occur? They do not necessarily occur through the existence of a regional or metropolitan

authority or body of some kind, even if it is directly elected. In the literature on planning, there has been a lot of advocacy which I have joined in myself in favour of elected metropolitan or regional bodies. There is much to be said for such bodies, but it should also be realised that they are not necessarily successful in getting effective planning results.

One reason is that such a body can easily get squeezed between the levels of government above and below it and consequently, it can find it has rather little room for manoeuver, that it is not politically powerful enough to achieve a great deal. In the case of London, there was originally a regional advisory planning committee of the local authorities, but it was a fairly weak body and effectiveness of regional planning came about through the backing of central government supported by one major local authority, the London County Council, which governed the core of London, containing under half of the population of greater London. Abercrombie's regional plans formed the blueprint for further action which was then pushed through by the national Minister for Town and Country Planning. He also secured legislation to appoint new town development corporations which then built the eight new towns (Figure 4) around London, and subsequently, under the later regional plans, a further ring of larger

new towns was created, about 50 to 100 miles distant from London, the best known being Milton Keynes (Figure 5).

Other legislation provided for the control of land values in such a way that there would be no compensation payable when development was refused permission on greenfield sites. The actual law said that you were not entitled to compensation for not being allowed to exceed the density you already had, plus a ten percent addition of cubic space in the case of redevelopment. But beyond that there was no compensation which gave planners the ability to stop development where desirable. This arrangement was linked with a system of development charges on increments in land value where development was permitted. But the history of British planning is that the development charges were repealed subsequently by the Conservative government in the 1950s but the no compensation provisions were kept. (There was actually a payment of compensation but it was at pegged prices which were paid out gradually when permissions were refused). This legislation was very important for things like greenbelts and environmental protection and it was again secured by a central Ministry and the Minister also got power to approve the plans of the county councils who were largely responsible for carrying out the regional plan.

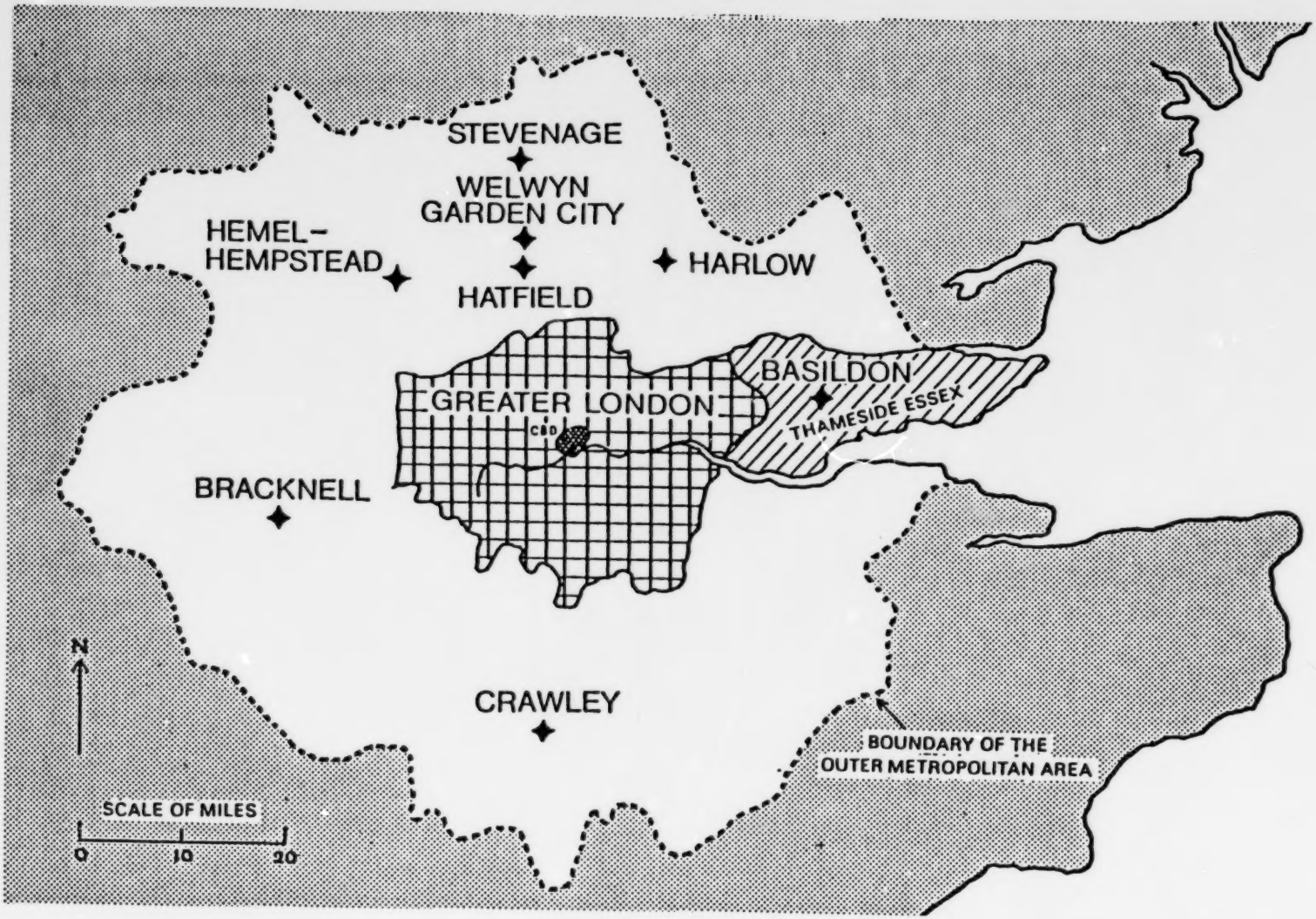


Figure 4: London's New Towns in Abercrombie's Plan

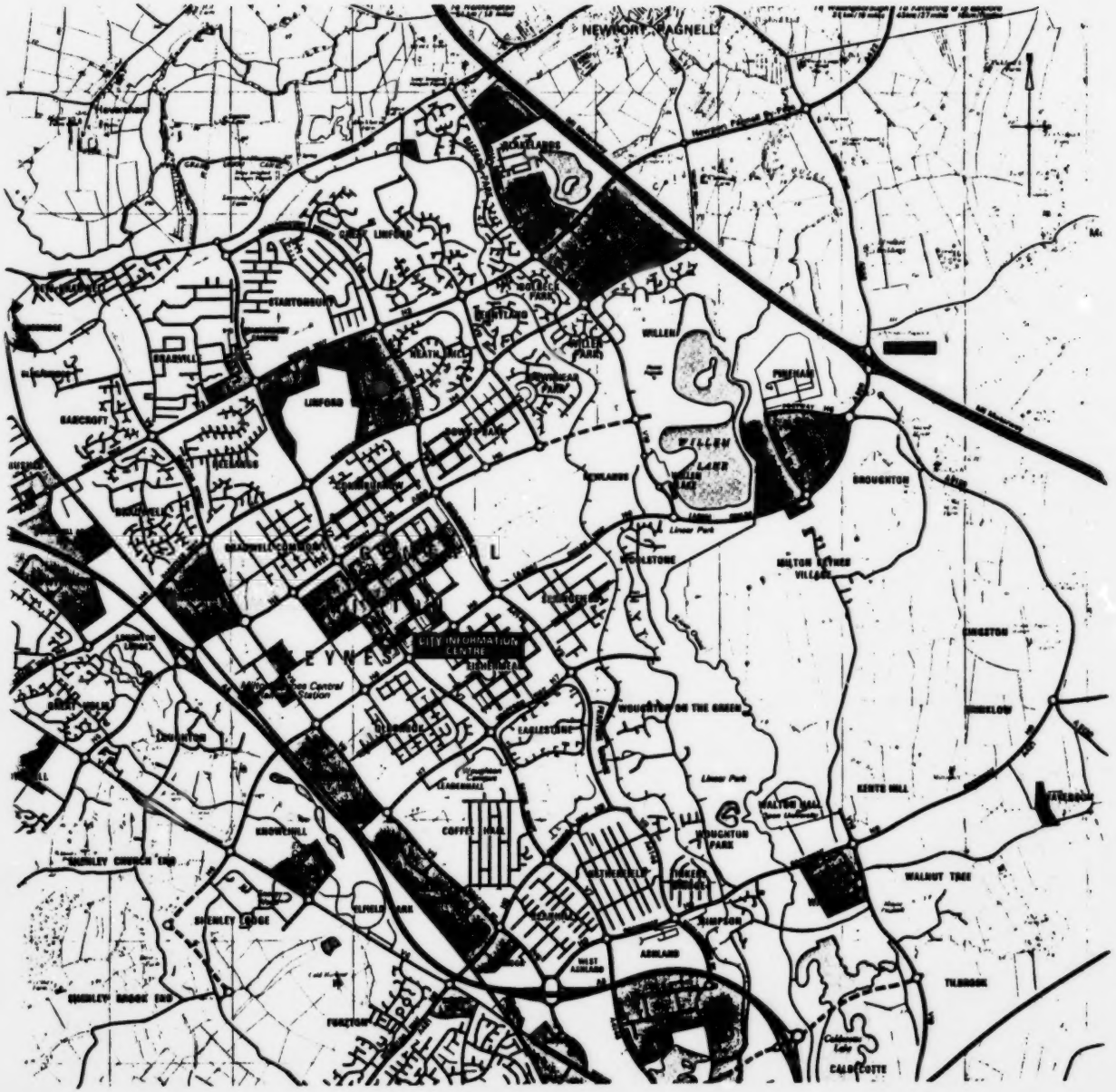


Figure 5: The Plan for Milton Keynes

I shall provide some examples of the way that central government backing was essential for planning. Co-ordination was critical, as for example the government committees which linked physical planning with incentives for the relocation of industry and employment. Of course, there were still conflicts of policy between departments but there was a lot of machinery for pushing through the regional plan by direct initiatives like new towns and land value legislation, and by co-ordinative measures with other departments and with the local planning authorities. The London County Council for various reasons fully endorsed the purposes of the plan and participated very strongly over redevelopment and the decentralisation of population and employment.

In the case of Stockholm, the moving spirit was the city government backed up, in this case, by the central government. But I think the interesting thing in Stockholm has been the ability of the city government to plan quite radically and in a very integrated way within its boundaries, because its plan was able to combine public transport plans, highway plans, housing plans (since it controlled directly or indirectly three-quarters of the housing going up for many years) and the provision of social and welfare

facilities which are at a high level in Sweden. Not only that, but the City also owned 70% of the land within the city which it had bought up in advance over the years. But that wasn't the end, because the city government also pushed forward regional planning in various ways. It took the lead in forming regional committees for planning, for housing, and for transportation in co-operation with the surrounding local communes. It also bought up land extensively beyond the city boundaries through dummy companies in anticipation of further development of Stockholm in due course. And of course the final thing that the city of Stockholm did was to advocate the transfer of many of its own powers to a regional body, Stockholm county, which was reconstructed as a planning and transportation authority and which took over the whole of the city's public transport system. This was done by the city's own decision in order to get more effective regional planning. So if there was any success there, it was due to a very active and far-sighted city government, not a metro government or an elected regional authority, although the latter was brought into existence.

In the case of the Paris regional plan, central government in the shape of the French Economic Planning Commission was the initiating body. It could see the need for a much bolder and broader type of regional plan for Paris, and this concept was instrumental in the creation of a new regional authority for the Paris region which was much wider than a metro authority. La Region d'Ille-de-France covers eight departments and is deliberately designed to fit the optimum planning area for the long-term development of a Parisian region which extends up to 100 miles from the centre of Paris. The Parisian regional plan of 1965 was perhaps the most ambitious ever produced, with its determination of broad axes of development, large new towns, transportation and airport developments, enormous green reservations. The Paris regional body is now directly elected and it has significant powers in relation to regional planning. For example, one of its agencies buys up large areas of land for green reservations. It has close links with the development of the Parisian new towns by mixed societies, as they are called in France, and it subsidizes public transport so as to achieve the purposes of the regional plan.

So far we have discussed regional planning with hardly a mention of metro government. The essence of a metro plan is that it combines a metro government covering the whole urban area with smaller second-tier local governments. Metro is elected, directly or indirectly, and powers are shared. The first major metro reform in the Western world was Metro Toronto in Canada. There has been a metro government movement in the USA which has had little success in creating elective metro governments, although it was instrumental in getting the creation of the metropolitan councils of government. These are rather weak bodies as a rule since their powers derive from the Federal Government's conditions over grants to local government. The Federal agencies often made their grants conditional on some planning being done on a metropolitan scale for the purpose or function in question, and the metropolitan councils of government was often recognised as the body for certifying that this condition had been met. That was a limited leverage for planning which has declined under the Reagan agenda for cutting down detailed Federal conditions and eschewing ambitious goals such as metro planning. I think it would be a fair proposition that the effectiveness of such bodies depends upon the backing

of state government. For example, the metro council of government for the Twin cities, Minneapolis and St.Paul, was very much a creature of the state government, since its members were not chosen by the constituent local governments (as is usual) but by the governor of the state. Only the governor appointed each member to represent a particular constituency. As a consequence of state backing, this metropolitan council received some real power over the approval of local plans, including requirements that they make adequate provision for middle and lower income housing. Council also got power to approve the budgets of big development agencies like the water board and the airport authority and to veto their development decisions.

Metro governments have also developed in Europe. I mentioned the one in Stockholm which was the product of the city's initiative. In France, there are metro governments called urban communities. In Britain there was a spate of local government reform starting with Greater London in the early 1960s and then going on with the local government act in the early 1970s which created elective metropolitan authorities for all the major urban areas of Britain. But they had a short life because they were all abolished a little while ago by the central government.

One of the main reasons for the creation of metro governments was the case for "strategic planning" for the whole of a large urbanised area of conurbation. Strategic planning is often defined as covering physical planning, transportation and housing policy. These functions would be divided in various ways with the smaller local governments within the metro area. This theory of strategic planning bears a considerable resemblance to the concept of positive regional planning which I have been discussing. Indeed, the metro governments were seen as the natural heirs or inheritors of those regional plans which were already in existence. In the case of London, it was argued by the central Ministry itself that regional planning ought to be democratised and placed under the control of a directly elected Greater London Council instead of being dependent upon a high degree of central government initiatives and co-ordination. In the case of Stockholm, the City itself (as we have seen) brought about the creation of a broader regional government. Only in the case of Paris (of the three examples I have discussed) was the new machinery introduced for urban regional planning without a previous history of effective action by either a central government or a strong city government.

It was a further consequence of these changes that those strong city governments which previously existed lost much of their planning powers (as with Stockholm City) or, in the case of the London County Council, were abolished to make way for a new two-tier system of metropolitan government. The London County Council had been (like Stockholm) an exceptionally powerful authority, a pioneer in the fields of education and welfare as well as housing and planning. The Council also has been the developer of enormous housing estates and complete satellite towns beyond its own restricted boundaries which corresponded to the limits of Victorian London. The new Greater London Council had a much wider area but fewer powers which had to be shared with 32 newly created elected borough councils as well as the ancient City of London, whose Lord Mayor has continued to be received around the world as the honoured representative of London, although he actually governs a mere square mile of very valuable property with hardly any residents, through the medium of an archaic constitution - but that is by the way.

Clearly it is important to know now successfully metro governments have performed their strategic planning tasks, and I tried to do this for London, Stockholm and Toronto in a fairly recent book.(2) I examined the performance of these metros over physical planning, transportation and housing. Here I have room for only a few points, concentrating primarily upon London.

The basic problem for the Greater London Council (GLC) was that despite its constituency of eight million people, it still tended to be ground between the millstones of central government controls and the 32 London boroughs and the City with whom it shared many functions. This division of functions was theoretically reasonable - the GLC dealt with the larger issues and projects, the boroughs with the smaller ones - but in practice was open to continuous controversy until or unless an effective GLC role was established.

Take for example questions of urban redevelopment. The GLC had powers to deal with strategic examples of urban redevelopment, but how were these to be defined? The GLC suggested various criteria such as large areas of

derelict land or obsolescent property, zones of great cultural or historical significance and big new transportation nodes. In practice the boroughs didn't want the GLC to take over these areas so it became a tug-of-war. The GLC did get into a few significant redevelopment ventures, perhaps the best known being Covent Garden which, however, was in the curious position of being split between two boroughs, which was really why the GLC could take the lead. The GLC also constructed a new town in Thamesmead on the desolate Erith marshes and a few other major ventures, but it was dogged by conflicts. The key area was Docklands, a large area close to the City of London becoming available for new developments because of the movement of the port down river and offering opportunities for offices, housing, parks, a heliport, a trade mart, the conversion of the old warehouses into boutiques or luxury flats and so on. There was a lot of political controversy because the local borough councils who were Labour controlled quite naturally wanted to use the land to attract new industries and to supplement their own inadequate housing and recreational facilities. They did not see Docklands as primarily an overflow from the City of London, whereas others saw the more lucrative possibilities of high-class housing, offices, and places of entertainment in parts of Docklands. The GLC was the obvious body as strategic planner to reconcile

these interests. It sponsored plans and established a joint committee with the boroughs, but, from the start, it was outflanked by central government Ministers who sponsored their own plans and surveys. Eventually after the GLC was abolished the Conservative Government entrusted the planning of Dockland to an urban development corporation which represented a victory for the commercial interests and a defeat for the Labour councils.

The GLC was an interesting experiment and I was sorry to see its demise but I do not think it was as effective a planning body as its predecessor, the London County Council (LCC), even though the LCC covered a much smaller area and population. Partly this was a matter of politics- the LCC had the stability of long-lasting Labour administration whereas the GLC alternated politically in line with national trends which precluded it from achieving an agreed role within the short period of its contentious life. Partly, as we have seen, the GLC suffered from being pig-in-the-middle between the Government and strong boroughs. Finally, the area of the GLC - broad as it was - covered bricks and mortar London and not the rapidly expanding region around it. Yet an effective metropolitan strategy must deal with the areas of growth as well as decline, as the experience of successful regional planning shows. In this sense the GLC could not have

been and was not (despite the Ministry's hopes) the successor to the Abercombie plans. On the contrary, regional planning has continued under the guidance (now the faltering guidance) of central government, helped by a standing conference of local planning authorities and (for a time) an appointed regional economic planning council.

Metro governments, as usually conceived, may not prove to be very effective strategic planning authorities, although circumstances will vary. It is noteworthy that both Stockholm County and the Parisian regional authority cover genuine urban regions, including scope for further expansion, and not just urbanised areas. That has not been true of most metro governments. Moveover, a metro government will not be able to plan effectively if it includes other powerful local governments. The design of metro systems is a delicate and difficult business which needs to combine responsiveness to local opinion at the second-tier level with effectiveness at the higher level. Finally, metro governments cannot do without the support of the central or provincial government; and such governments will often be jealous of a large metro government which is seen as a rival to their own powers.

A final difficulty is the creation of political consciousness and support at the metro level itself, which is not easy to establish, although some metros, like Metro Toronto, may claim some success here. Metros tend to make their mark with big public works, although public works like urban freeways can also be controversial. Metros do best if they can pursue a balanced transportation policy, embracing strong public transport improvements as well as highways. If a metro cannot function effectively, the obvious alternative is a broader regional council, containing representatives of both central and local government. Such a body inevitably has few operational powers compared with a metro council but has at least the advantage that its planning will not be dominated by particular operational functions. Having less of a political power basis, it may be better placed to achieve co-operation and co-ordination. All the same, a hybrid regional body of this type will not be able to achieve much, unless it has some effective regulatory and financial powers which are supported by central or provincial government - the sort of situations which occurred in the Twin Cities. This is to date a rather rare situation, and one must admit that there is no easy organizational solution to the quest for strategic metro planning.

Today we see a weakening of the sort of collective social goals that I have been describing. Why is this? One reason clearly is the stronger role of the market, the acceptance of more of a market philosophy in shaping cities. Perhaps too there is current a more polycentric view of cities; that there should not be a strong regional body, that urban policies should emerge out of the particular choices, conflicts, competitions of smaller local governments. Then there are the problems of the time scale. Today the time scale of politicians is very much shorter than is required by the sort of planning I have been describing. Look at successful regional plans - they all operated on something like a 20 year time scale. But today the pressure is for much shorter time scales. This may be partly cultural, partly a perspective of the market, and partly that political time scales have become short.

Of course there are all sorts of factors here, depending on the particular constitutional system. I have been in Australia and there one of the political facts is that the same parties operate at federal and state level and they are state based parties. consequently, since there are six states in the Federation and two elected houses in all the State

governments, except Queensland where there is one elected house. There are three or four year election cycles at a maximum and there is a perpetual round of elections engaging the close attention of both Federal and State politicians.

In advising on metropolitan strategy for the Sydney region I found there were two conflicting policies there that were interesting in terms of the broader goals I have mentioned. One was the policy of urban containment, the problem there being that Sydney has 3.5 million people and half of them are now in Western sydney, well back from the older parts of the city which consists of the harbour and the coast, and living on a flat plain which is rapidly getting filled up and where lines of communication and journeys to work are long (Figure 6). Work opportunities are inadequate in Western Sydney and there is industrial unemployment. There is a very strong case on egalitarian and social grounds for enabling more people, and particularly groups like single parent families, to live in the inner areas of Sydney nearer the facilities and nearer the coast, where the population is in fact declining. What stops this happening is very high land values plus the reluctance of many local councils to zone more land for medium density development. Yet a moderate policy of urban containment

Figure 6:

Principles
of Sydney Region Plan

is not only an egalitarian goal, but also an efficiency goal in terms of the use public services, as well as an environmental goal because when Sydney (Figure 7) extends to the mountain ring around it; all the easily developable land will have been used up and there will be a lot of pollution problems (air and water). There already are problems in fact. But it is very hard to get these conclusions across. Planning in Sydney is seen as a land co-ordination exercise to keep the urban frontier moving on in a steady flow, to ensure that enough land is available at the right times and is co-ordinated with the necessary minimum public infrastructure, and if possible to try and keep down land prices. Even this limited role for positive planning was not achieved without considerable struggle and the creation of a land co-ordination unit of state government.

Metropolitan planning has been seen largely as projecting that requirement for land further ahead in a purely 'trend' manner. Under this approach, there is a failure to think through the longer-term strategic options so that the positive role of metro planning gets lost. Many other large cities are today in a rather similar position with their planning.

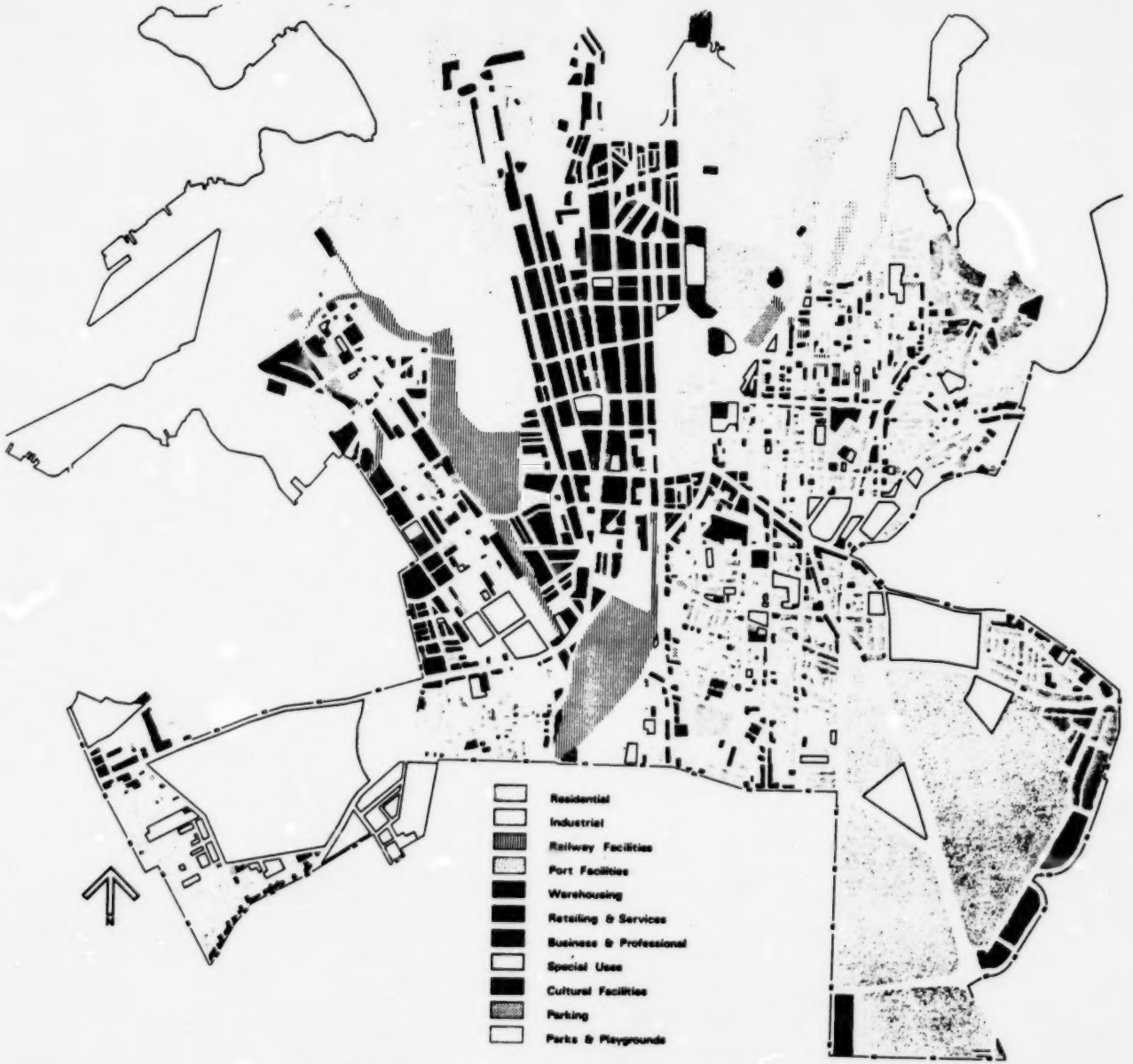


Figure 7: City of Sydney - Land Use (1970)

In conclusion, is there any hope of more positive planning in the future? My short answer is that there must always be hope. I myself am an unreformed believer in the central importance of land value legislation, in other words I don ont believe that you will ever have effective or positive public planning until the planning authority is able to acquire and utilise increments in land value effectively. The equitable case for this is obvious enough, increments in land value being the results of the community and economic growth and in no way of the effort of the individual landowner. These increments should be used to improve the quality of public services and the environment and to enable the people of the city or locality to participate in and to contribute to planning. I would stress the latter point because under present conditions, though participation exercises are fashionable in planning, it is the case that the people with material interests in land have such a very strong motivation to participate, whereas individuals who are ignorant of their stake, or who have no stake, do not have that same direct interest. Therefore, I think there is a considerable inequality in what can be gained from participation in planning. So that I think effective planning turns on land legislation reform.

This may seem a lost cause in 1987 when land values have been entirely assimilated into the capitalist system and are now held by respectable organizations like trade unions and pension funds and so on. Nonetheless, I still believe that what I say is true and I think the examples of effective planning I have given all hinge either on land value legislation and/or on effective, prompt advance land acquisition by a strong public authority which could then reap the benefits of growth in land values and master-mind the pattern of development. That certainly is how planning in Stockholm worked. Land policies also had a lot of relevance in London and Paris - not to the same extent but still significantly.

I also think that planning, to have an effective regional philosophy, will need to broaden out and to bring back into its agenda subjects which have escaped in many countries from physical planning as now practised by the planning profession. I refer to such public policies as transportation, energy and regional development. Until these elements are reassembled into planning theory along with environmental goals, there will be no move back to positive planning. But sooner or later it may come. We may get planning again on a broader front and with new instruments, and it is therefore well worth thinking about the prospects now.

DISCUSSION

I have given a view of regional planning which you may think is impractical, out of date, or even undesirable, so if you do, then please respond and let us examine the arguments.

Question: I wasn't too clear about your reference to the Stockholm experience. What was the prevalent system of land ownership? What were the choices? Did the owner have to sell to the city government?

Response: As far as I know the prevalent pattern of ownership was freehold like anywhere else and the city government got all this land by deliberate policy, a political policy, of buying it up many years before it needed the land. I refer to large agricultural areas within and beyond the city, which were leased out for farming until required. It is interesting that these policies were started by a conservative city council, which simply treated this as prudent municipal finance and development. The way for a city to pay its way was to get hold of land in abundance - that was

the thesis, and it's a thesis that has been applied by other conservative councils - in England by Bedford, for example, another conservative council and Swindon, a Labour one.

Question: I was looking more at the angle of the price spent on the land.

Response: It wasn't compulsorily acquired. It was a free market purchase. Today, there is land value legislation in Sweden, whereby land for most forms of development is acquired by local authorities at existing use values which largely exclude development values. This was also the purpose of the British Community Land Act in the 1970s, but it was repealed before it could get results.

Question: .....The notion of the policy of selling off council flats to individual owners is gaining acceptance not only among Tory bashers but also by others as well. ..... I was wondering what your opinion is of that as a planning specialist?

Response: Selling off council flats and houses has been done extensively by the Thatcher government in Britain. In one sense it's a very resonable policy. Why shouldn't individuals own their houses if they want to? The chief problem with the policy is that it tends to remove the better quality public housing from the public sector and that I think is a real drawback, so the public sector is left with a lot of the highrise housing which is very unpopular (at least among many people) and this is a a real problem. That has happended in a number of places. It plays havoc with housing finances. I wouldn't matter if all public housing was equally desirable and popular. To give you another example: in Melbourne, Australia, the Liberal government in the 1970s was busy selling off its suburban public housing at the same time as it was building high rise housing with very large federal subsidies, which then proved pretty unpopular. At the end of the day, the federal government was putting money into replacing better public housing with worse public housing. It is very important that tenants' rights should be improved in certain ways in public housing, but I think it is also important to have a larger supply of public housing available for those who need it, sometimes only temporarily.

Question: I understand your eminently reasonable objectives, to be achieved at regional scale. But unless there are some vested regional interests, either bureaucratic or political, there is a crisis. I'm arguing that unless there is a legitimate political authority that is required to think about these issues, probably with a big technocrat infrastructure of planners and engineers, or some crisis that confronts the metropolitan area, nobody is going to pay attention to these eminently important goals on a regional basis and ti will be left to local councils and/or state or provincial governments to deal with crises from time to time without this kind of strategic planning. It seems to me that in spite of the relative absence of political authority in London, Stockholm or Paris, we should take a traditional view and be telling society that we need this level as the middle of a sandwich between the local and state or national governments. It just is necessary.

Response: Well, I would say you are probably right, but I did try to point out that the examples of fairly successful regional planning that I know about did not seem in fact to involve this middle level elected body.

Question: Well, does that mean that the three "e's" are no longer considered so critical or that they have been attained to such an extent that politicians are not being pressed to do anything about it?

Response: Another point I think I would make is that one must distinguish between city government and metro government. The government of the large traditional type of city is a different kind of animal from the metro or regional government, and I would certainly argue that big city governments are generally more effective in planning than metro governments. Theoretically the metro government should be more effective because it covers a broader area, though incidentally the problem there is that once you go to the metro level really you need to go to the broader regional level, because after all the urban area is continually expanding into green areas with transport links, water supply problems, recreational needs, etc., so why stop at the bricks and mortar of the metro body? So, I think that from a planning point of view you really need to go on to a broader regional level. Now if that second tier of local government is strong, your metro authority is going to be rather limited in what it can do as an operational authority, when you compare it with to a strong city

government. If you are combining planning with operational power, a strong city government has a lot more bite as the examples of London and Stockholm show, I think. However, you can look at tit a little differently and say yes, but the problem of an effective metro or urban regional body is not to have strong operating functions. On the contrary, that's just what it shouldn't have because then it would be wagged by one particular operating function like transport or highways, and therefore what you are looking for at that level is a different kind of planning body which could be described as a strategic planning body in the sense that it would be working to a considerable extent through other bodies. It would be giving support, financial and technical, to other smaller bodies, to local governments and co-operatives and so on, and it would have certain powers of vetting major development decisions and so on. All these powers might be there but they might require rather small staff. If we revise our concept of planning in those sort of terms then it will be very rational to have an elected urban regional body. The only problem is, is the public going to interest itself in such a body?

Questioner: Well, I think there certainly is a Canadian response which I think is unlike the British or the Australian response in my experience. The Canadian response is that the statutory authority is probably the best way to go and I tend to support that in the sense that there is always a waxing and waning of interest and concerns in the metropolitan regions. If you do set up a statutory body, such as your Vancouver Regional District or Greater Winnipeg, even when the fighting occurs it can still function whereas an advisory body as it is maintained in the United States loses its credibility because it is not able to have any influence at all. Your caution about linking planning and major operations is well taken. The Highways Department in Metro Toronto had for a long time a big sway, until, in spite of what you said about public participation, the Spadina expressway was stopped. The Highways Department was rally taken down a peg and there was a new balance. What I'm saying is that over the long haul the statutory body, whether elected or appointed from constituent municipalities, is perhaps something for political scientists to worry about but at least it has some permanence and it has functions and it has tax dollars that council has to be responsible for raising and justifying, and planning that it has to do. The other thing is

that on the three "e's", the equality and equity goal is the most difficult one to maintain concensus on. This was Albert Rose's point about Metro Toronto - after they had put in the roads and drains then things got really tough when they talked about social services, housing and education.

Response: That's a very interesting comment. I take your point about the Spadina expressway and the effectiveness of public participation there. It is an interesting point that it could be effective there because you're dealing with the balance of demands between public and private transportation. Where land value is much more relevant is where you're dealing with zoning for new development or re-development, whereas on these transportation issues I think public opinion can be mobilized. But I think your other points are interesting, about Canadian experience of regional bodies. would you say, then, that these Canadian metro bodies in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg were effective in devising regional strategies?

Questioner: I think to a large extent they have been. They suffer from the same squeezing between provincial and local government and that I think is because they are newcomers in the constitutional or institutional

arena. They displace something of both the provincial governments' and local governments' powers. But I think at their best, in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal they have been quite effective.

Response: They find it hard, don't they, to get official regional plans approved? I understand that in Toronto there have been long delays over the regional plan.

Questioner: That's right.

Response: But perhaps that doesn't matter too much? Would you say that too much stress has been put on blueprint planning and statutorily approved plans?

Questioner: Well, there is a continuing planning function with a very high profile in Metro Toronto and I know that I, among others, seem to be distressed over there not being a plan. But if you look back over nearly 30 years now, I'm not sure that that was all that crucial. There were planners and there were ideas and concepts and they did have to be tested publicly and so forth.

Response: It's also interesting that you say that environmental and efficiency values are acceptable to Canadians but not equity.

Questioner: I would have thought that almost anywhere, including in Australia and Britain, they were the softer goals and harder to achieve concensus on.

Response: Well, that may well be right - this was less true 20 or 30 years ago and I think that's because social structures change. Instead of a large, relatively underprivileged majority with a strong interest in collective consumption, the majority now are interested in private consumption and are much less willing to pay out tax money for collective purposes to benefit the underprivileged minority or rather minorities, and I think this is a political change-over. I agree with you that it has occurred everywhere. And yet, it's also interesting that you find in a lot of the planning literature - I don't know whether you find it a lot in Canada but you do in Britain - greater equality or redistribution or equity is often seen as the only or main justification for urban planning. Do you get much of that viewpoint here?

Questioner: There is a lot of cross-reading on these things and most of the publications are from Britain or the United States and you realise that the ideas are at least heard of if not thought of, although I don't know if they have been acted upon.

Response: One of the problems with discussion of planning and public policies is the conflicting approaches because the traditional way of discussion was very much in terms of the liberal public policy tradition which assumes responsible citizenship and the ability of public planning to be shaped by a general consensus. The counter tradition of neo-marxism teaches the irrelevance or gross bias of public planning, and I don't know that these two positions have ever been brought together.

Question: I think the answer has to be attention to a third tradition and that's the Tory tradition which accepts benevolent big government as necessary in Canada to keep this 3,000 mile string of settlements together, whether it was CPR or national policy at the federal

level, and we have been accepting, until fairly recently, of the idea that the public role was necessary in some fashion to keep this society together without a "shootout". It was not a liberal shootout as in the United States.

Response: That's right. There is that third view and it's very much a prevailing view in Australia - government as a vast utility corporation essential for individual welfare. It has something to do with the scale of the country, the problems of infrastructure, the need for public investment. Some of these factors are there, but is this tradition then in your view declining?

Questioner: The rhetoric isn't there but the actions are. There's hardly a major decision in this country that doesn't involve both sectors, particularly in the lobbies in the resource areas. You open a new mine in the northeast, there's a huge investment in transportation, infrastructure and power for example, underwriting for the development of a new town... and all this is done in the name of free enterprise of course.

Response: That of course is a fascinating description of a natural resource based economy. It would be less applicable presumably to Toronto or Montreal city politics.

Questioner: Major developments along waterfronts are public funded. Hydro Quebec and others are very much supported by provincial government and are able to sell cheap energy to northern US states because of government subsidies to the projects.

Chairman: I am delighted that you opened up this question of metropolitan government because I did research on this in Australia four years ago - and I thought nobody was interested in this subject - and you have revived my interest in the subject. Thank you so much.

Notes (1) Popenoe, David, The Suburban Environment: Sweden and the United States, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1977.

(2) Self, Peter, Planning the Urban Region, University of Alabama Press and Allen and Unwin (London), 1982.

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